17

January

Fontainas has been suffering from rheumatism for a month. But I just learned this yesterday. I hesitate to go and see him for fear that in return, as soon as I am ill, he may call on me.

In his study, the sweet and stale odor of medicines. Dulled by salicylate, he hasn't been able to do anything for a month, he says. He complains that his brain is still stupefied; this is apparent, moreover; and since he has never been a brilliant conversationalist (nor I either), every few minutes there is a great silence that we break only by the most desperate efforts.

He is getting a novel ready, but excuses himself from talking about it for fear of spoiling it. He questions me about Charmoy. whom Griffin has done anything but recommend to him. I tell him the whole story. He accompanies me to the door. He is enormous and rather bloated. But apart from that, a good fellow; stifled by his own virtues.

Marvelous return from Passy on the river-boat.

The first act of *Alceste* at the Schola. Endless concert. *Alceste* comes too late on the program, when the public is already tired. And I must confess that my emotion is less keen than it was at Cuverville when I played *Alceste* to myself on the piano. The wonderful linear proportion is not sufficiently obvious in the orchestra; one's mind constantly loses the measure and the whole thing becomes a succession of emotions. , . , Gluck loses a great deal in not being acted out. On the stage the acting constantly brings out or recalls the happy proportions of the ensemble, and the harmony is not simply temporal, Gluck's music adds a fourth dimension to the three dimensions of the stage. To sing an aria

from Gluck at a concert is all right; but sing a whole act —and I just don't listen.

18

January

I am feeling well. My mornings, my days, my evenings are almost empty; in other words, as full as I could wish of meditation, of work, of reading. I almost never open my piano any more, unwilling to give it only a few minutes each day, and equally unwilling just now to give it any more time. I begin each day by persuading myself that this day is very important; I am easily persuaded of this, moreover. More health, more calm, more clairvoyance. Why should the artist's famous "fatality** always be blind? Oh, clairvoyant fatality! Understand, love, aid the force that drags you on. . . . I eat less, smoke hardly at all, drink almost nothing but water. , . . (Yet last night, about to meet Eroile X., I felt so trembling, so full of anguish, that I had to go into a caf6 and drink two glasses of whisky. . . . I could go no farther.)